MARVEL

3

X-23: DEADLY REGENESIS

SCHULTZ
SALAZAR
LOPEZ

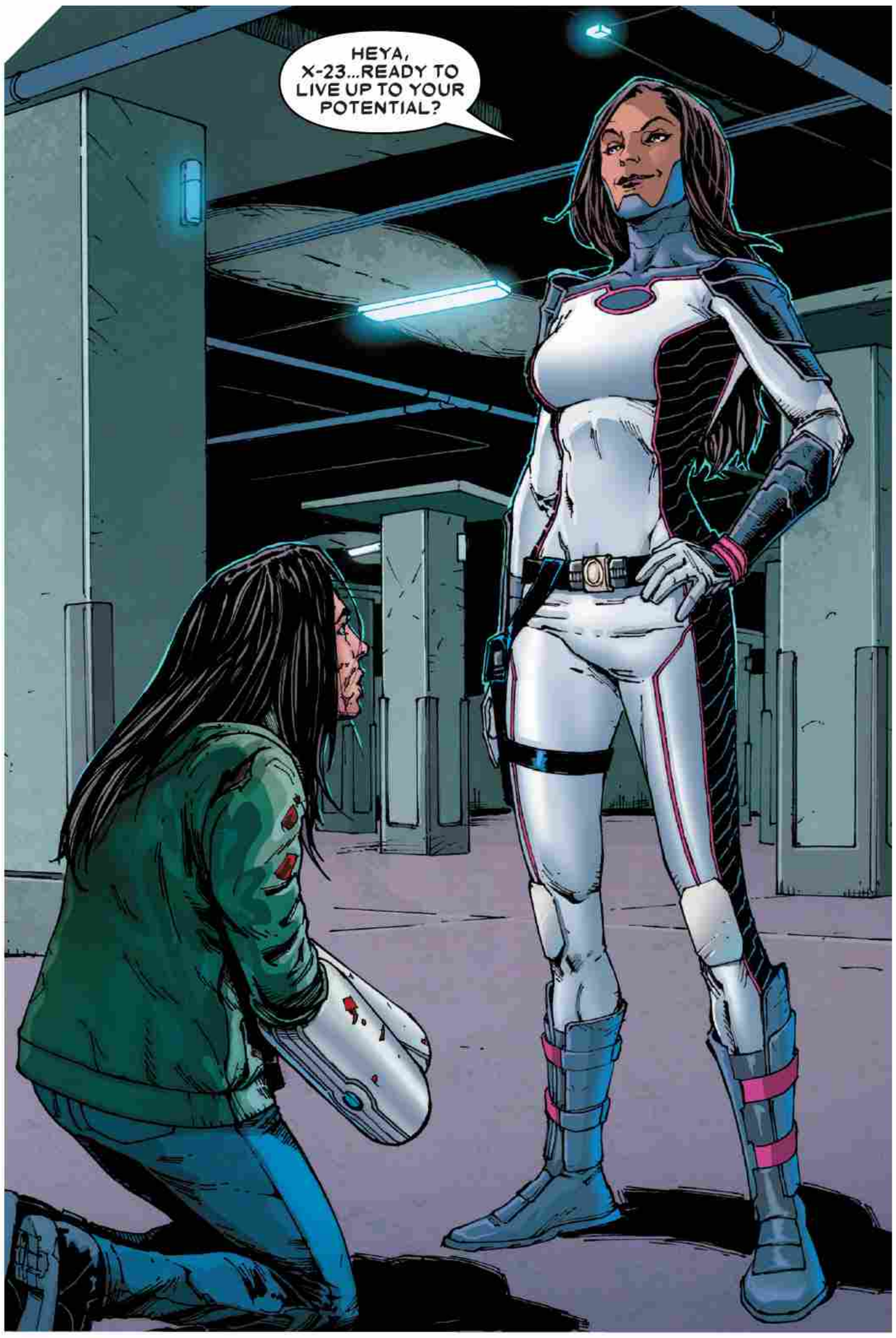
Cloned from the mutant Logan, A.K.A. Wolverine, Laura Kinney was made to be the perfect weapon. With adamantium-coated claws on both hands and feet, a healing factor and heightened senses, as X-23, she more than lived up to that promise. Becoming one of the world's most sought-after assassins while still only a teenager, X-23 has been forced to kill by numerous organizations. After escaping that life, Laura joined the X-Men, eventually joining them on Utopia, the island sanctuary established as a haven for mutantkind. Seeking to understand her place in the world, X-23 has struck out on her own, hoping to find the humanity that was so long denied to her…

X-23 DEADLY REGENESIS

PREVIOUSLY...

On her travels away from Utopia, Laura rescued several people from a building fire in Minneapolis. Her heroic efforts caught the attention of the local media, which put her back on the radar of her old handler, Kimura. Hoping to capture Laura at the behest of her employer, Kimura deployed a brawler named Jordan Gastin, A.K.A. Haymaker, to bring her in alive.

But Haymaker had a personal score to settle with Laura, who, as an assassin for the Facility, was responsible for killing Jordan's brother years earlier. Deploying a gas that temporarily neutralized Laura's healing factor, Jordan gave her a brutal beatdown, eventually knocking her out and bringing her to Kimura, who had a new proposition for X-23…



EDITOR'S NOTE: This story takes place prior to *X-23 (2010) #4*.

THE PAST HAUNTS US ALL PART 3

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NOW.

WHAM

KIMURA HAS KNOWN NOTHING BUT CRUELTY...

...NOTHING BUT PAIN.

THEN.

KRAK

ANGER PROPELS HER ACTIONS.

GET UP, X!

:KOFF KOFF:

ONE COULD ALMOST PITY HER...

...ALMOST.

PTOO

I KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE DRIVEN BY ANGER...

...TO BE *CONTROLLED* BY IT.

LOGAN IS THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO UNDERSTANDS.

IT'S OKAY, KID.

HE KNOWS THE BLINDNESS THAT COMES WITH RAGE.

SNIKT

YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, LAURA.

AND HE HAS TOLD ME THAT IT IS ALL RIGHT TO FEEL THE RAGE...

...IT IS ALL RIGHT TO FEEL... *ANYTHING.*

WAKEY, WAKEY, X-23.

HOW'RE YA FEELING?

NEVER MIND. I *KNOW* YOU WON'T TELL ME THE TRUTH.

÷HUK÷

SO LET'S GET A LOOK, SHALL WE? I'M A HANDS-ON KINDA GAL...

JUST GONNA PHASE RIGHT IN THERE...

HMM... STRONG BONES.

÷HURK÷

YOU DRINK A LOTTA MILK?

I SAY YOU'VE HEALED ENOUGH FOR MY PURPOSES. YOU'VE STILL GOT A CRACKED RIB, BUT YOU'LL BE OKAY.

BEEP

BUT JUST IN CASE...

FSSSST

THAT'LL STOP YOUR HEALING FACTOR FOR A BIT.

CAN'T HAVE YOU THINKING YOU CAN JUST RUN AMOK.

:KOFF KOFF:

SHE THINKS I NEED TO HEAL TO FIGHT?

SHE DOES NOT KNOW ME AS WELL AS SHE THINKS.

SHUNK

C'MON OUT, X.

PSPSPSPS... C'MON, LITTLE GIRL...

JUST KILL ME, KIMURA, AND BE DONE WITH IT.

I DON'T WANNA *KILL* YA, X...

...I NEVER DID.

YOU'RE TOO MUCH FUN TO PLAY WITH.

OOH, SORRY...WAS THAT THE RIB THAT WAS STILL CRACKED? BUMMER.

GNNF!

WHUD

LOOK, THE BIG BOSS IS PAYING ME A *TON* OF MONEY TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE ON OUR SIDE, SO I COULDN'T KILL YA EVEN IF I WANTED TO.

THAT'S WHAT WE CALL IN THE BIZ A "WIN/WIN."

YOU LIVE. I GET TO TORTURE YOU.

THE FACILITY WAS DESTROYED. WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

THERE'S *ALWAYS* GONNA BE ANOTHER PLACE LIKE THE FACILITY, X.

JUST LIKE THERE'S ALWAYS GONNA BE SOMEONE PULLING YOUR STRINGS.

KEEP A GOOD HOLD ON HER, BOYS. SHE'S LIKE A FERAL ANIMAL.

I KNOW YOU THOUGHT THE X-MEN WERE YOUR *FRIENDS*, BUT HERE'S SOME ADVICE...

YOU DON'T *HAVE* ANY FRIENDS, X...

C'MON, I'LL GIVE YA THE NICKEL TOUR.

...JUST *MISSIONS.*

THERE THEY ARE!

HEY, JORDAN.

WAVE TO JORDAN, X.

OKAY, BACK TO BUSINESS.

SO, VICE IS NICE...AT LEAST WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE CONTROLLING THE CASH FLOW.

AND WE ALL KNOW HOW MUCH PEOPLE LOVE THEIR VICE.

IN *THIS* ECONOMY, PEOPLE CAN DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING FOR A JOB.

I'VE GOT 'EM WORKING ON *MGH*.

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH RICH COLLEGE KIDS LOVE THAT STUFF.

WHAT DO YOU HOLD OVER THEM TO MAKE THEM COMPLIANT?

NO MONEY WOULD MAKE THEM SUFFER YOUR ABUSE.

YOU'D BE ***SURPRISED*** WHAT PEOPLE DO WHEN THEY'RE DESPERATE, X...

"...YOU REMEMBER BEING ***DESPERATE***, RIGHT?"

BUT THEY DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

THEY'RE ALL MGH ADDICTS, AND *THIS* FORMULATION WON'T GIVE 'EM THE FIX THEY NEED.

LEMME SHOW YOU HOW IT WORKS.

WITH THEIR TOLERANCE, THEY'D HAVE TO DOWN *A WHOLE VAT* OF THE LIQUID STUFF...

...JUST TO GET HALF OF WHAT THESE PILLS HAVE.

AND THERE'S NO OTHER PLACE TO GET 'EM THAN THROUGH ME.

NO NO NO NO...

I... I NEED HELP.

HELP ME!

UH-OH... SOUNDS LIKE *SOMEONE* NEEDS ANOTHER DOSE QUICKER THAN WE THOUGHT.

HELP THEM, KIMURA. THEY ARE NO USE TO YOU DEAD.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED. JUST WATCH THE SHOW!

OUT OF THE WAY!

HEY!

WAIT YOUR TURN!

I... NEED... *HELP!*

GET BACK IN LINE!

NO!

THWUMP

÷CHOKE÷ ÷GURGLE÷

WELL, *THAT* WAS ANTICLIMACTIC.

EH, IT'S NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE, BUT THE EGGHEADS TELL ME THEY'RE WORKING ON IT.

HEY, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW...HOW COME YOUR FEET DON'T CLANG WHEN YOU WALK?

I MEAN, YOU'VE GOT THOSE ADAMANTIUM FOOT-CLAWS, SO...WHY DON'T YOU MAKE CLANG-Y NOISES WHEN YOU RUN?

I HAD NO SAY IN WHAT THE FACILITY-- WHAT *YOU*-- DID TO ME.

IF I HAD--

WHAT?

YOU WOULDN'T'VE CHOSEN THIS LIFE? YOU WOULDN'T'VE WANTED TO BE A *HERO?*

BULL%@$#.

WHAT I WAS FORCED TO DO--

"--IT WAS *NOT* HEROIC."

"TOMAY-TO, TOMAH-TO."

WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE ALREADY THINKING ABOUT HOW YOU'RE GONNA LIBERATE THESE POOR SCHMUCKS.

ISN'T *THAT* HEROIC?

WELL, LEMME STOP YOU RIGHT THERE, X.

YOU THINK THAT GUY'S FOAMY-MOUTH MELTDOWN WAS BAD, YOU SHOULD SEE SOME OF THE OTHER FREAKS WE GOT IN THIS JOINT.

THESE JERKS NEED THEIR DAILY DOSE OF MGH.

AND IF *I'M* NOT AROUND TO GET IT TO THEM?

THEY *ALL* DIE.

HOW DO I GET THESE PEOPLE OUT FROM UNDER KIMURA'S THUMB WITHOUT JUST KILLING HER AND EVERYONE ELSE HERE?

NOW TELL ME, HERO...

"...YOU DON'T WANT *THAT* MUCH BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS, DO YOU?"

SHE IS RIGHT. THERE *IS* BLOOD ON MY HANDS.

MY TIME IN THE FACILITY WAS ONLY PART OF IT...

BUT X-FORCE WAS FOR THE GREATER GOOD...

...RIGHT?

THIS IS OUR RETIREMENT WING.

I WAS NOT AWARE RETIREMENT WAS AN OPTION.

THERE'S GOTTA BE A WAY TO GET 'EM BACK ON THE FLOOR, BUT WE'RE WORKING OUR SCIENTISTS HARD ENOUGH.

GO ON IN...

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

SNFF SNFF

I SMELL BLOOD... AND DEATH.

SHUNK

WHAT GAME ARE YOU PLAYING, KIMURA?

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

WH-WHAT HAVE YOU DONE...?

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

THIS IS SICK... DEPRAVED!

EVEN FOR KIMURA.

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

HMPH...I MAY HAVE TO CRACK DOWN ON THE SCIENCE HEADS...

...WE'RE RUNNING OUTTA BEDS!

YEAH, JUST PUT THE NEWBIE ANYWHERE HE FITS.

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, X?

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED WITH EVERYONE.

OKAY, THIS IS MARTIN. HE FELL ON HARD TIMES WHEN HE LOST HIS JOB AT A NEWSPAPER.

ROUGH BREAK.

SAYS HERE HE WAS A BASTARD OF A HUSBAND THOUGH...

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? WHAT DO YOU GAIN BY THIS *CRUELTY?*

WHAT?

I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW WHO YOU'RE LOOKING TO SAVE.

THEY'RE NOT *ALL* GOOD. BUT YOU'RE A HERO NOW, SO THAT DOESN'T MATTER, RIGHT?

DON'T HEROES STAND UP FOR *EVERYONE?*

OH, YOU WANNA TAKE A *STAB* AT ME, DON'T YA?

ANOTHER ONE OF HER TESTS.

OKAY. LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

KLUNK

SNIKT

I AM THROUGH PLAYING HER GAMES.

GOOD OR BAD, THESE PEOPLE DO NOT DESERVE THIS LIFE.

I MUST PROTECT THEM FROM HER... AND EVERYONE ELSE IN THIS HELL.

LET THEM GO, KIMURA.

WHAT? YOU THINK THESE PLEBES EVEN KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM?

THEY AIN'T WORTH IT.

ALL LIFE IS WORTH IT... EXCEPT MAYBE YOURS.

I MUST DO WHAT THE OTHERS HERE CANNOT DO... HAVE NOT DONE.

HERE'S ANTONIA...SHE'S AN MGH ADDICT AND ADDICTED TO METH.

OH... I CAN SEE YOU REALLY WANNA GO.

YOU'RE NOT A HUNDRED PERCENT, YOUR HEALING FACTOR IS CURRENTLY INERT AND I DON'T THINK YOU KNOW WHAT I'M PREPARED TO DO.

NO MORE!

SHE NEVER #&%$&@# LISTENS.

BLAM

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

NOW *THIS* IS A SUPER HERO POSE I CAN GET USED TO.
YOU DID NOT HAVE TO KILL THEM.
THEY DID NOTHING WRONG.
THAT'S RIGHT...*THEY* DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG...
...BUT *YOU* DISOBEYED ME, X.
AND THAT HAS CONSEQUENCES.
DO WE POP ANOTHER ONE?
I CAN END THIS RIGHT NOW.
I AM FASTER THAN HER TRIGGER FINGER.
KILLING IS NOT HEROIC...
...BUT THIS WOULD BE MERCY.
ANSWER ME, X. DO I PULL THE TRIGGER AGAIN, OR HAVE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON?
I'LL BE HONEST, THEY'RE ONLY STILL ALIVE AS LEVERAGE.
WE BOTH KNOW YOU NEED *MOTIVATION.*
SNAKT
GOOD GIRL.
TAKE HER BACK TO THE CAGE...
...AND SET UP A SLIDESHOW FOR HER.

IF I WERE TO DIE HERE, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO ALL THESE PEOPLE?

WOULD THEY REALLY DIE WITHOUT KIMURA'S INTERVENTION?

JASON CAMPBELL, AGE 37.

THOSE WHOM I HAVE HURT WOULD SAY DEATH IS TOO GOOD FOR ME.

ARE THEY CORRECT?

LEAH CARTER, AGE 41.

HOW IS HER RE-EDUCATION GOING?

THE X-MEN MADE HER SOFT, BUT I KNOW WHAT BUTTONS TO PUSH ON HER.

MARTIN KING, AGE 28.

HELL, I PUT *ALL* THE BUTTONS THERE MYSELF.

MY DEATH MAY BE MY COMEUPPANCE, BUT MOST HERE DO NOT DESERVE THAT.

THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THEM IS TO BE ON THE INSIDE...

ALISHA BROWN, AGE 23.

...TO REVERT TO WHAT I ONCE WAS.

KEEP THE FODDER AS LONG AS THEY'RE USEFUL. OTHERWISE, GET RID OF THEM.

I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED, BOSS.

THIS IS MESSED UP, KIMURA...EVEN FOR YOU.

I CAN'T KEEP--

HOW'S THAT DAUGHTER OF YOURS, BURNHAM?

SHE GRADUATE MIDDLE SCHOOL YET?

YOU PROMISE HER A PONY WHEN SHE TURNS 13?

YOU CAN'T--

I CAN AND WOULD.

I HAVE A CHOICE NOW.

SAM-- SAMUEL ADKINS, AGE 44.

AND I MUST NOT TAKE THAT LIGHTLY.

BUT IS THIS THE CORRECT DECISION TO MAKE?

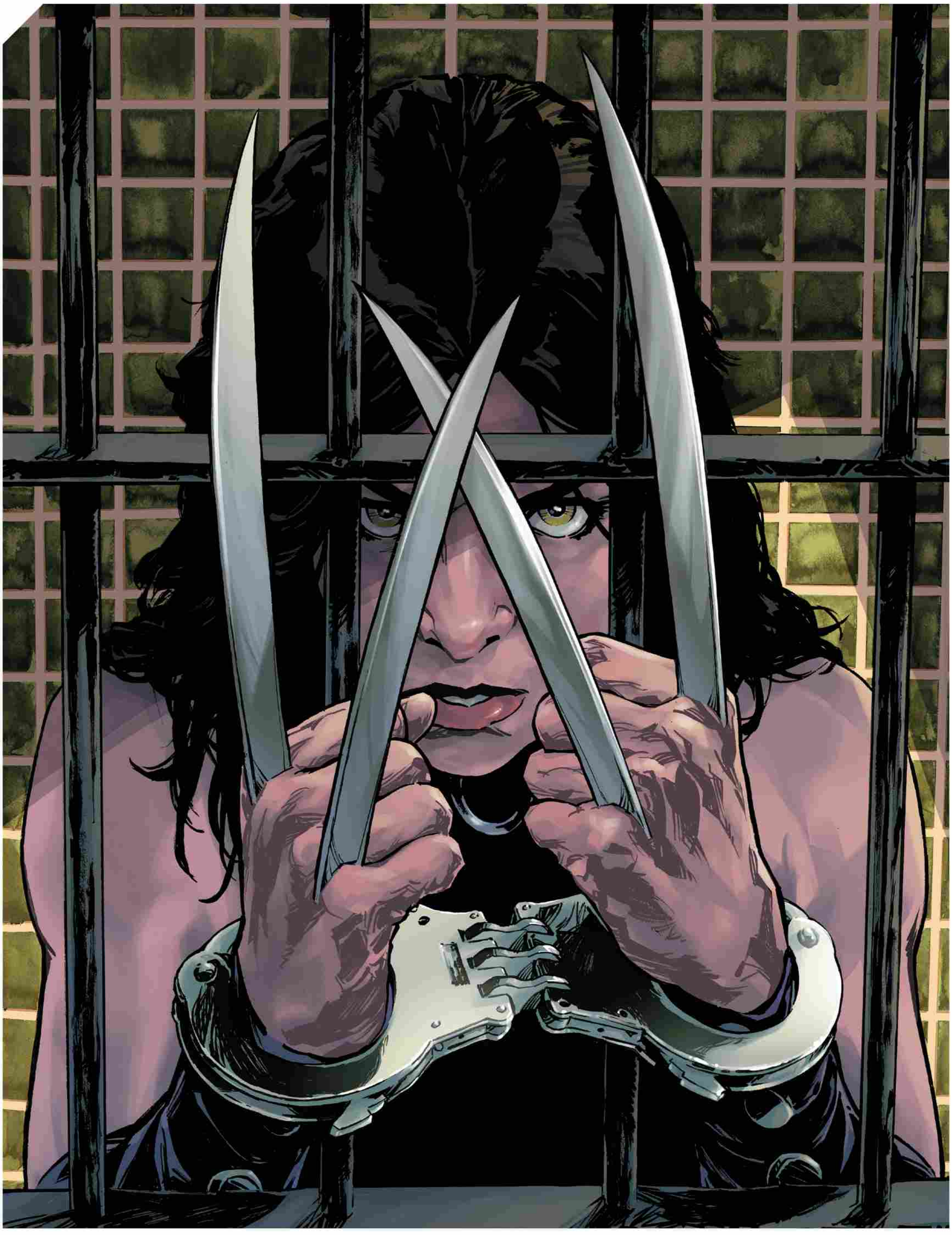
WELL, X...WHAT'LL IT BE?

WHAT IS THE MISSION, KIMURA?

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT...

X-23 DEADLY REGENESIS #4



X-23 is back under Kimura's control! Can she escape Kimura's cage, or will her deadly skills once again be put to nefarious ends?

ZONE